

TPP in the Wild: Fighting Illegal Trade



Illegal wildlife trade is on the rise globally, including in the Asia-Pacific region. Driven by a rapidly expanding wealthy class with a taste for wildlife products such as ivory and rhino horn, there has been a dramatic uptick in poaching. Experts are reporting that we may be on the brink of one of the greatest extinctions in history.

- Javan rhinos are critically endangered, with less than 50 mature species left in the wild. In 2011, conservationists declared a subspecies of Javan rhino found only in Vietnam extinct when authorities found the last rhino shot dead with its horn removed.
- Wild tiger numbers are at historic lows, with as few as 3,000 in existence in the wild today, including only several hundred of the Malayan tiger subspecies.
- Asian elephants, the sun bear (the world's smallest bear), the highly-trafficked pangolin, and exotic birds and reptiles are among other threatened species.



Trafficking in wildlife and timber is also increasingly a threat to national security. Criminal elements of all kinds, including terrorist organizations, are believed to be involved in poaching and transporting ivory and rhino horn across and out of Africa. In some cases, these networks are the same or overlap with those that deal in other illicit goods such as drugs and weapons.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership provides “teeth” in the fight against illegal trafficking. The problem of wildlife trafficking is a global problem requiring concerted international action. The TPP Agreement – being negotiated with 11 other Asia Pacific countries – provides an international platform for enhanced action.

The TPP Agreement is on track to require countries to:

- **Implement the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.** CITES regulates trade in approximately 5,600 species of animals and 30,000 species of plants.
- **Combat wildlife trafficking, including in species protected under CITES as well as any other species that has been taken or traded illegally, regardless of the source country.**
- **Effectively enforce environmental and conservation laws.** Weaknesses in the enforcement of national conservation regimes have been a key factor contributing to the rise of illegal wildlife trade.
- **Implement strong anti-corruption protections.** Bribery and corruption are often at the root of illegal trafficking schemes.
- **Improve regional cooperation.** TPP is set to become the first U.S. agreement to bring stand-alone cooperation provisions into the core of the trade agreement. International cooperation and information sharing is critical as trafficking does not respect national boundaries.

All of these commitments will be subject to dispute settlement and the application of trade sanctions in the event of violation.

Bottom Line: TPP can help to stem the tragic extinction of endangered species in the Asia-Pacific region and across the globe through enhanced conservation measures and protections, as well as requirements to effectively enforce environmental protections and engage in enhanced regional cooperation.